

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

St NICHOLAS'S CHURCH in *Newcastle*,

BEFORE THE

G O V E R N O R S

OF THE

I N F I R M A R Y,

For the C O U N T I E S of

Durham, Newcastle, and Northumberland,

On THURSDAY *May 23, 1751.*

B E I N G

The Day appointed for Opening the H O S P I T A L for the
Reception of P A T I E N T S, and for returning Thanks to
Almighty God for the singular Success He hath given to this
Charity; and for imploring His Blessing upon it at all Times.

By T H O. S H A R P, D. D.
Archdeacon of Northumberland, and Prebendary of Durham.

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LUKE X. ver. 36, and part of 37.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was Neighbour to him that fell among the Thieves?

And he said, He that shewed Mercy on him.

THERE seems to be something peculiar, and worthy of our Attention, in the Application our Saviour makes of this Word *Neighbour* to the *Samaritan*, of whom he had been just before relating, in the Way of Parable, an extraordinary Act of Goodness, in relieving and taking Care of a *wounded and half-dead Man*.

WE may not at first Sight perceive *what*, or *how much*, is contain'd in this Character of a *Neighbour*, as it is here applied. It has indeed appear'd a Matter of some Difficulty with the *Commentators* how to account for its being attributed to the *Samaritan*, rather than

to the *wounded Man*, since the latter, by the apparent Scope of the Parable, was design'd to represent a *Neighbour* in the farthest Remove, or in the largest Acceptation of the Word.

You will be so good as to lend me your Patience a little, while, by a short Comment on this Passage, I endeavour to remove that Difficulty, and at the same Time lay a Foundation for applying my Text to the *Welcome Occasion* of our meeting here this Day ; The Propriety of which Application you will the better judge of after you have learn'd *the Force* and *beautiful Import* of the Word *Neighbour* in this Place.

THE Text then is a Resolution of a Question that had been put to our Saviour by a *certain Lawyer*, who asked him, *ver. 29. Who is my Neighbour?* A Question which will not seem strange to us, when we take into Consideration that there was a real Dispute then subsisting among the *Jewish Scribes* and *Lawyers*, whether any Person, who was not of their *own Nation and Religion*, ought to be

be accounted a *Neighbour*, or treated as *such*, on the footing of God's Command, to love our *Neighbour as ourselves*, Lev. xix. 18.

Now, our blessed Lord, to convince *this Querist* how easily he might have answered the Question himself, * had he reflected a little, on the one hand, upon *those Affections common to our Nature, those tender Impressions of which every Man is originally susceptible, and by which he is moved to commiserate others in their Sorrow and Distress*: And, on the other hand, upon *the Situation of Things around him*

* We may observe a similar Conduct in our Saviour, a few Verses above, in respect to this same Lawyer, who had asked him first of all, *What he should do to inherit eternal Life?* ver. 25. To which Question, however unexceptionable in itself, our Lord doth not answer *directly*, but shews *the Enquirer*; by asking him another Question, how easily he might have satisfied himself concerning *the Requisites to Salvation*, if he had given sufficient Attention to what he already knew about them. *What is written in the Law? How readest thou?* ver. 26. In like Manner, he replies here to the Lawyer's second Query, *viz.* by asking him, (for his Question is really to this Effect) *What is written in the Book of Nature? How readest thou in thine own Heart concerning this Matter?* For tho' it is not expressed in these very Terms, yet the Parable, with its Application, amounts to this. Appeals to Nature and to Conscience are always the most powerful Arguments for Conviction, and the *Moral of a Fable* is oftentimes the most awakening Instruction.

him, and the various Forms of Misery and Woe that present themselves to View on every Side, and beget uneasy Sensations upon every Survey of human Life; Our Lord, I say, to shew him how clearly these *two Reflections*, when laid together, would point out to him the very Thing he was enquiring after, puts him a *Case*, as if it were *Fact*, where both these Reflections must be unavoidably co-excited, and concur to the Solution of his Question. And instead of laying down any Rules concerning *Neighbours*, (which probably the Lawyer expected) instead of giving him any formal Instructions in the Laws of Humanity and Charity, he propounds to him a *practicable Instance*, or Example of *true neighbourly Kindness*, so wisely adjusted, as equally to express *its Force* and *its Extent*. Its *Force*, in the *Neighbour* who is said to *shew the Mercy*; and its *Extent* in the *Neighbour* on whom the *Mercy* is said to have been *shewn*.

A TRAVELLING Jew † is represented as by
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† This is denoted, as hath been observed upon the Passage, by its being said at *ver. 30*, that *he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho*; which implies *Jerusalem* being the Place of his common Residence or Abode.

Accident involved in most afflicting Circumstances, and painted in all the imaginable Colours of Distress ; and yet disregarded and neglected by two of his own Countrymen successively ; tho' they were his Neighbours on their own Principles, and Persons too, who, by their Education and Tribe, were well instructed, and ought to have been as well practised, in their Duty to their Neighbour : but at length relieved most seasonably and most unexpectedly by a *Stranger* and a *reputed Enemy* ; for such were the *Samaritans* esteem'd by the *Jews*.

WHY, here is an Instance of *human Goodness* so drawn to the Life, so amiably striking at first Sight, as to command Approbation from Men of all Principles and Tempers, An Act so finely circumstanced, as to shut out all Possibility of Cavil § or Exception. So
that

§ It is worth while to take Notice how *appositely* the Parable is framed to preclude any further *Queries* from the Lawyer upon the Matter. If our Lord had not brought in to his Representation of a *right neighbourly Action* some *Personage* supposed to be *alienated* from the *Jewish Commonwealth* and Worship, the designed Purport of it could not have been fully reached. For it might still have been asked, how the Case would have stood, if an *Alien*, or a *Stranger*,
had

that our Lord having ended the short, but significant Narrative, makes the Lawyer himself decide his own Question, by only asking him in the Words of my Text, *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was NEIGHBOUR unto him that fell among the Thieves?* Why, no Man upon Earth, who speaks his own Sentiments, can give any other Answer than what the Lawyer did. For, let his Judgment be never so much depraved by false Principles, or his Temper never so much hardened by repeated

had been a Party concern'd with a *Jew* in such a Transaction? Therefore, he brings a *Stranger* into the Scene, and what is more, a *Samaritan*, a reputed *Foe* as well as a *Stranger*: A *Foe* in Religion, on which Subject Enmities are too commonly the bitterest. Wherefore, the *Jews* had no Dealings with the *Samaritans*, John iv. 9. and we need not doubt their Enmity was reciprocal; tho' the *Samaritan* is here represented as being what he should be.

Again, if he had exhibited *this Stranger* as the Object of Distress and Pity, and had thereupon introduced some tender-hearted *Jew* expressing his Humanity and private Sentiments of neighbourly Kindness (in the Manner described) to an *Alien* and *Enemy*, even this would not have come up to the Point: because, how seasonable soever such Compassion might have seemed, it still might have been demanded, whether this good-natur'd sympathizing *Jew* was in Strictness bound to do what he did, considering the Character of the Object that stirred his Compassion? Or, whether he had not extended his Mercy too far, by shewing it on a Person *without*
the

peated Acts of Inhumanity ; yet were he *obliged* to declare his Mind *truly* on the Case, as put by our Saviour, he must indubitably, and, from Conviction, reply with the Lawyer, that *of those three* in whose Way the *disastrous Object* laid, the Man who *shewed the Mercy* was the *Neighbour*.

BUT here it has been thought some Difficulty occurs, with respect to the Manner of our Saviour's treating the Lawyer's Doubt, because here is no *explicit* Answer given to his Question. He had ask'd at large, *Who was his Neighbour?* He is here only compelled to confess,

the Pale, and who could have no Right to it, as not being one of God's peculiar Fold.

Neither in this Case would the Indifferency or Insensibility ascribed to the *Priest* and *Levite* have glanced with half the Poignancy that it does on the Neglects of neighbourly Duties among the *Jews* themselves ; because it might have been pretended in Excuse for their *want of Bowels* on this Occasion, that the Object wanted the Qualifications requisite to intitle him to their Assistance. Neither, lastly, would the Conclusion have come out as it did, to the Lawyer's Conviction : For from such an Act of a *Jew* towards an *Alien*, it could only have been inferred, that *the Alien* so relieved was obliged to look upon a *Jew* as *his Neighbour*, but not that a *Jew* was bound to hold an *Alien* in the same Light ; which yet was the Thing to be shewn.

fels, that an extraordinary Benefactor ought to be accounted so; at least preferably to those who decline neighbourly Offices when they have it in their Power to perform them.

BUT if you will please to attend to the Construction of the Parable, I believe you will find much more to be inferred from it than this comes to. For tho' it cannot be said to be a *direct* Way of answering the Question; (and I just now intimated the Reason why it should not be so, but the Lawyer be left rather to his own Inferences) yet of all the *indirect* Ways of replying, it is the most full and conclusive: For it strikes at the very Root of all those Partialities which had occasioned the Question being ask'd at all; and affords, in a most obvious Deduction from it, a very satisfactory Answer to the original Question, *viz.* That every Man, of what Country, Kindred, or Religion soever he be, must be reputed and treated as a Neighbour, when he hath a *natural* or *universally acknowledged* Claim to our Service and Assistance.

You may observe, that our Lord has so worded his Question, that there was no Room
to

to evade this Acknowledgment. For he does not ask, *which of the three was the merciful Man?* or whose Behaviour on the Occasion was the most commendable? But which of them was NEIGHBOUR unto him that fell among the Thieves? Now the bare Concession, which was extorted from the Lawyer, that the *Samaritan* had acted the true *Neighbour's* Part, when the *Priest* and the *Levite* had most shamefully declined it, was decisive against all partial Distinctions of *Neighbourhood* from *local Position*, *civil Relations*, or *religious Communion*; because it evidently appears from thence, that whenever an Act of *Humanity*, as such, is the Consideration present, the Ideas of the *Relation*, and of the *Duty* of a *Neighbour*, cannot be absent, but are clearly and sensibly connected with it, exclusively of all other Considerations. And consequently, *because all Relations are mutual*, whosoever is in great Distress, and cannot help himself, whether he be our Countryman, or a Foreigner; of our Church, or of another Religion; a Friend or a Foe; he is still to be esteemed our *Neighbour*, as to all the common Offices of Humanity. This, I say, plainly follows, by

a Deduction indeed, but by a very clear one. And tho' it is scarce possible the Lawyer should not have made it himself, yet our Lord takes Care to make it for him, when he adds in the very next Words following the Text, *Go, and do thou likewise*, ver. 37.

I THINK I have now said all that was needful for my intended Application to the agreeable Subject of this Day's Convention, which is the carrying into immediate Execution a very important, and a very desirable Work, by *Opening our HOSPITAL for the Admission of Patients*, with our solemn Thanksgivings to Almighty God for the *singular Success* he has hitherto given to this *Charity*, and with our Supplications for *his Blessing upon it* at all Times hereafter.

I. AND *first*, were I to give no higher a Commendation of *this Work*, now in its Commencement, than that it is an Act of *true neighbourly Kindness*, this alone, as should appear from what I have been already saying, is no small *Encomium*. For the Word *Neighbour*, since our blessed Lord's Consecration of
it

it to such a Sense as to be descriptive of all those inward Affections and Fellow-feelings of each others Sickness and Pains, which excite our Endeavours to remove or assuage them, conveys a finer and a more exalted Idea than the literal or proper Meaning of the Word in any Language doth express. The *Hebrews* * had no Word for Humanity; and the *Greeks* and *Latins* had no Word for *Neighbour*, that carried the Idea higher than *Proximity*, or *Nearness* either of *Habitation* or in *Blood*. Yet you have seen that it cannot, in either of these Senses, be understood of the *Samaritan*, who had neither *Proximity* by *Relation* or by *Abode* to the wounded Man, and

* It is true the *Hebrew* Word for *Neighbour*, used in the Law, *Lev. xix. 18.* to which the Lawyer's Question refers, is taken from a *Root* whose first Signification is *to feed*, and hath amongst its secondary Senses those of *accompanying* and *loving* as a Shepherd doth his Flock. And hence the Noun comes to signify not only *Neighbour* and *Fellow*, but *Companion* and *Friend*. And as *Maldonate* well observes, these very Senses of the Word might contribute to the Conceit of the *Jews*, that *Aliens* and *Enemies* were not to be reputed *Neighbours*. But our Saviour here corrects their Error, and restores the Word *Neighbour*, by his Usage of it in this Place, to its fullest primitive Signification in the *Hebrew* Tongue, even when extended to, or spoken of, the whole human Species.

and whose Title to *Neighbour* could only be founded on a further and a more noble Acceptation of the Word, and which I think is likewise peculiar to this Passage †, viz. a *Proximity* of Kindness, or a *Nearness* in Mercy.

Now whereas the Terms *Mercy* and *Charity* are of such Latitude, and the Duties themselves branch out into so many Particulars, that distinct Names are frequently given to the several different Exercises of them, if *Neighbourly-kindness*, in the Sense above explained, were, for Distinction's sake, given to *this Branch of Charity* we are now exercising, I should think there were both Authority for it from my Text, and a Reason too, that would
make

† The original Word in St *Luke* doth not indeed by its own Force and Signification express *this*, any more than our Translation of it by *Neighbour* doth. For he uses the common *Greek* Word, simply denoting *Proximity*, as the *LXX* had done in their Version of the *Hebrew*. But tho' it comes not up to the Idea contain'd in the *Hebrew* Word, yet the Circumstances of this Passage oblige us to take it here, in that *refined Sense* in which I have interpreted it. Nevertheless, I do not know of another Instance of this same Use of the Word, either in the *Greek Testament*, or in any other *Greek* Author, *i. e.* where it is confin'd to *this particular Sense*, exclusive of all others.

make any Man covet the Appellation of *Neighbour*, and be ambitious to deserve it.

2. BUT then, 2dly, it follows also from my Text, that none deserve the Appellation, or can be intitled to it, but he who has his *Deeds* to produce for his *Title*, and can found it upon *right neighbourly Actions*. For of the *three*, concerning whom our Lord put this Question, tho' they were equally *Neighbours* in a general Sense of the Word, yet only One was *so* in the *eminent* and *dignifying Sense* which I have been expounding.

THIS Character, therefore, resteth not on any quiet, inactive, tho' good-natur'd *Principle*, but arises from a chearful *Performance* of generous *Deeds*; which are to be *felt* rather than *talked of*. For in every Species of Charity, the *Theory* without the *Practice* makes but a sorry Story. Had the Original Word for *shew'd* Mercy been render'd here, as it is in *Luke* i. 72. viz. *perform'd* the Mercy, you would have seen, that what I am now saying has its Foundation in my Text. There is nothing in the Parable to forbid the Supposition
that

that the wounded Man might have the barren Wishes even of the Priest and Levite when they saw his sad Condition: But what was he the better for them? Whosoever can content themselves with saying, *James ii. 16. Be ye warmed, be ye filled, notwithstanding they give not those Things that be needful for the Body*, may indeed make some Pretence of shewing Mercy by such fruitless Expressions, but still, as the *Apostle* tells us, this availeth nothing. *Brotherly-kindness* must be expressed by something more than by *Wishes* or *Words*: We must perform Mercy, and even put ourselves, if any extraordinary Occasion require it, to some Trouble and Inconvenience, rather than leave the Mercy short: For this, I judge, is likewise implied in the Example of the good Samaritan, and convey'd in the Appellation of Neighbour wherewith he was honour'd.

My Application of this will be very short, viz. That as the Mercy now before us may be said to be already perform'd, in respect of the Subscribers, and the Preparation of the Means of putting it in Execution; so every one among us, who hath contributed to the bring-

bringing it thus forward, hath made good his Title to this endearing Appellation of *Neighbour*, in proportion to his Instrumentality in this blessed Work. And tho' we thank every Body even for their good Wishes to us on this Occasion, yet *they* only who have joined with us in this *Labour of Love*, can claim our Acknowledgments *as a Debt* : And to them it is *a Debt* so justly due, that I shall endeavour to pay it them before I have done.

3. IN the mean time, 3^{dly}, To come closer to the Point, you would observe in the opening of my Text, the Appearance of a Difficulty occurring, from our Saviour's having transfer'd the Appellation of *Neighbour* from *the wounded Man*, to *the Samaritan* : or rather his *not* giving it to the *Sufferer*, as his *Claim to Mercy*, and yet giving it to the *Benefactor*, as his *Praise for performing Mercy*. I have accounted for this above, and shall now only beg Leave to make my Inference from it, which is, That the *Rich* and the *Potent* are the People who have it most in their Power to exercise the like Acts of *Neighbourhood* effectually upon the Poor and Helpless. No Doubt the Poor themselves are
very

very useful *Neighbours* to us all, nor could we do without their Assistance in their Way of giving it. But the real Value of Assistances will always rise, not in *the simple Proportion* of Peoples *Inclinations* to give it, but in the *duplicate Proportion* of their *Inclinations* and *Abilities*. And therefore it is to the *Gentlemen of Wealth and Fortune* that we must principally look for the compleatest Copies of the *Samaritan's Action*, if we would see it exemplified in its full Lustre.

AND I have the Pleasure to find, that this Observation, when applied to the Subject now in hand, carries with it its own *Probatum*, or the Proof of its Truth: For what hath brought forward our present Undertaking, with such happy Success, to so promising an Issue as we now flatter ourselves withal, but the favourable Acceptation of the Design by Persons of Quality, Rank, and Power in *these Counties*, whose *Inclinations* are as good as their *Abilities* are great: Who have taken upon them *the Part*, and thereby the *Denomination* of true *Neighbours* to our sick and disabled Poor, and have rendered their other Characters

acters in Life the more illustrious by their Condescension and Benevolence on this Occasion.

4. BUT, 4thly, To come up still closer to the Point. What deserves to have the chief Mark of Notice set upon it, is *the Instance* that our Lord chose to give of *Neighbourly-kindness*, in order to fix and ascertain the *Characteristick* of a *Neighbour*. You observe *the Instruction* given to the Lawyer (and thro' him to us all) is not made by stating any Argument upon the Reason of the Thing, is not drawn from the *Law* and the *Prophets*, nor urged on the Footing of any *Commandment* in the *second Table* of the *Decalogue*; but is taken, if I may so express it, *from an Infirmary Topick*: *A wounded Man, strip'd, without Money, without Help, half dead, and cast upon the High-way.*

SURELY no Description can be better calculated for exciting Compassion. And yet what our Lord here gives us only in *Representation*, is often by God's Providence exhibited to us in *Fact*; not perhaps just in the

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same

same Manner, or with the same Circumstances, but in a Manner, and with Circumstances equally deplorable.

PRAY what can be conceived more wretched in Life, (the Dolours of Sin, and the Pangs of Guilt alway excepted) I say, what can be conceived more lamentable in the external Condition of human Nature, than those *Combinations* of Distress, which many, and even innocent and unblameable People, are often seen to labour under, *viz.* grievous *Poverty*, accompanied with grievous *Pain*, or pining *Want* attach'd to a lingering *Malady*? Adjuncts so ill yoked together, that they aggravate each others Load, and become, when so united, a Pressure almost insupportable. They are Grievs so fatally complicated as to prevent each others Efforts for a Remedy. *Sickness* and *Pain* disabling the Patients from doing any thing to lighten the Weight of their *Poverty* and *Want*; and *Poverty* and *Want* disabling them from doing any thing towards the Removal of their *Sickness* or their *Pains*. And thus the poor Creatures, fetter'd with double Disasters, lye *inactive* in the common Roads

Roads of Life, and, by the silent Pleadings of their visible Distress, claim *our Mercy* with more persuasive Powers than even Language herself is Mistress of.—Many there are who *cannot* help them; Some, it may be, who, like the *Priest* and *Levite*, either thro' strange Principles, or strange Prejudices, *will not*, tho' they *can*. But if perchance some good *Samaritan* pass that Way, then *he acts the Neighbour*.

FOR such is the Wisdom of *Him* who has contrived and ruleth all Things, that as in his Works of Nature there is scarce any thing without its *Opposite* or *Counterpart*, which makes a beautiful *Contrast* in the Dispositions of the Parts of the whole visible Creation; So in His Dispensations also of Good and Evil to Mankind, something analogous is to be seen; and there is no *natural Evil* without its *Remedy*. Of which we are now fallen upon *one Instance*, viz. that as in the Course of God's *Providence* there are never wanting Objects to correspond with the Characters of Distress in the Parable; so neither, by God's *Grace*, are there wanting, on the other hand,
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compassionate Persons to sustain the Character of the *Samaritan* also, and to *perform his neighbourly Act*; tho' not perhaps just in the same manner, yet in a manner altogether as effectual for the Relief of such *sick and wounded* Persons as *Providence* hath prepared to meet their *Mercy*.

MUCH of this Benevolence, I am persuaded, is, and always has been practised in private Life, and with very good Effect. What then may be expected from the Exercise of it by a Publick Institution? What blessed Consequences may we not preface when we see a *Number* of such *Samaritans* collected into a *Body*, and forming themselves by a gracious Compact into a *Society for the Performance of this Mercy*, towards all the poor Objects within their View and Reach? Taking them up, and bringing them to a proper Place of Accommodation for them; *binding up their Wounds*, administering *Wine and Oil*, every healing Drug, every salutary Medicine, for the Alleviation of their Pains, Removal of their Sicknes, Support of their Spirits, Recovery of their Strength; and finally, if Nature doth her Part, and Providence hath not al-

allotted another Event, restoring them to Health again, that they may return to their Families and to their Employments, resume their Share in the Business and Labours of the World, and pay, each of them, their wonted Tribute to the Good of Society.

SURELY there are Charms, and undeniable ones, in this particular Branch of Beneficence. Such as have wrought powerfully in this publick-spirited Age on the Minds of our Countrymen in several Parts of the Kingdom; to the no less Honour than Advantage of the Nation, if we compute Advantages in Prospect along with those that are reap'd in present: That is to say, the *Moral* and *Religious*, as well as the *Civil Advantages* which may fairly be accounted *consequent* on the *natural* or immediately beneficial Effects of which this Institution of Infirmaries * is productive.

AND altho' we in these Counties, who are but very lately united in the same Publick
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* See *Lord Bishop of Durham's Sermon for the London Infirmary*; printed at *Newcastle*, and sold by *M. Bryson* and *W. Charnley*, and *J. Fleming*, p. 11, 12.

Design, cannot be able to say that we were among the earliest in contriving and putting into Execution this Benevolence, tho' at the same Time we were all sensible there was no Place where a *Publick HOSPITAL* for lame and sick Poor could be more useful than in this; yet I believe we may truly say, that we have more than attoned for our Delay by the Quickness of our Progress in it, thro' the Numbers who have engaged themselves in it, since the first opening of the *Subscriptions*; and the Alacrity of Spirit wherewith they have enter'd into the Lists. For no sooner were the *Springs* of this Charity open'd in this *Northern Climate*, than they broke forth in plentiful Issues: By whose Association and Conflux hither from all Parts, we may say with the Son of Sirach, *Our Brook became a River, and our River is become a Sea*, Eccl. xxiv. 31.

AND this so general a Concurrence from all Parts to this laudable Work, reminds me of my

5. FIFTH and last Inference from the good Action of the *Samaritan* in the Gospel, (and which

which indeed is extremely obvious from the whole Strain of the Parable) *viz.* That Neighbourly-kindness is of *no Party*, hath no Interests to serve but those of doing Good, and pursues no other.

IT is like the Divine Charity, (the Fountain Head from whence it flows) clear and unfullied with any fordid Mixtures of mean and unworthy Motives, directs its Current, and pursues its Course in uniform and open Channels, without any sinister Deviations, or intricate Windings, and descends in refreshing Streams upon its Objects ; not as *Party* forts them, or *Interest* and *Friendship* place them, but as *real Wants* and accumulated Misfortunes do recommend them. That is to say, in the Dispensation of this Mercy, every Man must be considered equally as a *Neighbour* ; and no Distinction must be thought of but what Misery hath already made. They who have the sad Prerogative of being the most miserable and helpless, must be the first Objects of our Care. They who are placed in the next Degree of Calamity and Inability, must in the next Place share in our Assistance ; and so on,
thro'

thro' the long Trains and wretchedly variegated Classes of *Sickness, Pain, and Poverty*, in a due Subordination of our Succours, proportion'd, as nearly as may be, to Mens real Exigencies. And if our Powers cannot extend to *the Relief of all* the Poor who shall claim it, and claim it perhaps they may under most of the *Articles* to be found in the *Bills of Mortality*; yet we may select out of those *mournful Tables of human Distempers and Casualties*, such Cases wherein Redress seems the most practicable, and Relief the most seasonable; and we may divide and distribute our Succours in such Manner as shall turn most to the Benefit of our Fellow-creatures in general.

AND so long as these disinterested Principles rule in us, and I hope we set out upon no other in the good Work before us, so long the Work itself will prosper, and be acceptable in the Sight of God and Man.

BUT should any narrow selfish Spirit creep in amongst us, and seek, under Disguise, to incorporate itself with the Charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. that *envieth not*, that is *not puffed up*,
that

that *seeketh not her own*; should any Tincture of *Party Strife, Pride, or Self-interest* visibly appear in our Proceedings, you may guess pretty surely what will prove the Consequence: *viz. Diffentions, Embarrassments, and Obstructions* in every Branch of the generous Undertaking: and at length the whole favourite Institution, tho' nursed at first with the greatest Care and Circumspection, will become distemper'd and crazy; and our *Infirmity* itself prove in the End as much the Object of *Publick Contempt*, as the poor Creatures for whose Use it is design'd are the Objects of *Publick Compassion*.

FORGIVE me even a Surmise of so great a Misfortune as this ever happening to us; for it is my Heart's Wish we never may have just Cause to apprehend it. Yet as a Caution on a Point upon which so much depends, it is worth mentioning; especially now at our first setting out, and while perfect Harmony subsists among our Members. For, so far as my Knowledge reacheth, there are all the promising Appearances of a continued and established Union among us that can be wish'd.

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So that I have nothing to blame or censure if I would, and have much more to applaud than any Praise of mine can do Justice to.

AND yet considering the Place where we now are, the Design of our coming hither, and the Part which I have now the Honour to discharge, it would seem almost unpardonable in me to pass over in Silence *one Circumstance* in the projected Establishment of *this Infirmary*, which is pretty *singular*, and deserves a Praise that is so too. I mean the pious Concern that the Managers of this Undertaking have shewn for *Religion*, not only by giving it *free Access* to their *House*, but providing a proper Accommodation for its Entertainment there.

RELIGION, as it is unconstrain'd in its Nature, and must never be forced or obtruded any where, so it is of that Delicacy concerning its proper Receptions, that it may easily be discouraged and discountenanced. But in *this Infirmary* it is so far from meeting with any Bar or Impediment to its *free and natural Operations*, that it is encouraged to an open and regular Exercise. And as the *Shunamite*,

2 Kings iv. 10. *built and furnished a little Chamber on the Wall for the Prophet Elisha to turn into,* as often as he went that Way, so in this *House* a peculiar Place is allotted and fitted up for the Ministers of God to perform his Service in ; to the End that the Souls of the poor Patients may not be neglected, while their Bodies are continued under Confinement and Regimen, for Restoration of Health.

I WOULD not be thought in mentioning this to design any Reflection on other Institutions of the same kind where this Circumstance is wanting, and the Concerns of Religion have not been equally well attended to, and provided for. All that I would apprise you of concerning this seasonable Tribute paid to *Piety* in the Midst of a Work of *Charity*, is this : That it is so contrived, and will be so conducted, as not to interfere with the faithful Disposal of any thing given to the proper Uses of the *Infirmity* ; so that no Man's *Charity*, who has not this Circumstance of *Piety* in his Consideration, can be infringed upon, or misapplied on that Account. And under this *Proviso* I make no Doubt but it will gain
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Credit to this Establishment in the Eyes and Sentiments of all considerate Men ; and, what is more, be a Means of procuring (as may be gather'd from the Reason of the Thing, without any superstitious Presumptions) a *Divine Blessing* upon the whole Undertaking in its future Progress.

BUT I must draw towards a Conclusion.

IT is not unlikely but you might observe in my giving out the Text, I stop'd short in the Middle of the Verse, and drop'd the Command of our Saviour to the Lawyer *to go and do likewise* ; which, considering whose Injunction it is, of what Consequence in general to Mankind, and how *a propos* to this kind of Charity in particular, might seem to claim its Place and Share of Consideration in this Discourse. And no doubt under this Head I might have expatiated, with great Propriety, on our Lord's own Example in this Point of *going and doing likewise* ; for he went about, *Mat. ix. 35. healing every Sickness and every Disease among the People* ; and not only *preaching the Gospel to the Poor*, *Mat. xi. 5.* but also

taking their Infirmities upon him, Mat. viii. 17. and curing their various Maladies. I might have further insisted on the great Encouragement he hath moreover given us to go and do likewise, by his gracious Declaration, that whatever we do of this kind to one of the least of his Brethren, Mat. xxv. 40. shall be reputed as done unto himself: That in visiting his sick Representatives, whom we have always with us, John xii. 8. We, by Interpretation, visit him whom we have not always, and whom we never beheld either sick or in Prison. Yet these and such like Topicks are unnecessary to be handled now, because you, the Subscribers, and Governors of this Charity, have prevented my Exhortations to this Duty, both by a previous Performance of it on your own Part, and by prudently refraining from soliciting a Collection from this present Assembly.

BUT by taking this Task of Exhortation off my Hands, you have indeed thrown into them another which is more agreable, and at this Time not to be dispensed with or postpon'd. I mean that of a Publick Acknowledgment

ledgment, in the Name of all the Poor in these Counties, for the Mercy you have designed and prepared for all those among them who are now, or shall hereafter be constrained by Sickness or accidental Hurts and Misfortunes to make Application for it.

BUT where to begin my Acknowledgments *in their Name* I am at a Loss. *A Person, it is said, there is, whom I should applaud unknown, and which I do the more for his being so:* But yet not in Diminution of the Praises due to those who readily espoused and improved his Scheme. For in what Sense soever *the Embryo* was His, the *grown Child* can boast in its *Adoptions* a great Number of *Fathers*, who must all share in its Homage and Respects, in proportion to the several Shares they have taken in its *Tuition*.

AMONG whom the first Acknowledgments will seem due to *the Nobles, and Gentlemen of Distinction* among *the Commons*, whose *Patronage* is as great a *Sanction* to the Design, as their *Abilities* will be a *Support* of it.

AND

AND in the next Place to Persons in the
 less exalted Ranks of Life, of all Professions
 or Vocations, Sexes or Communion, *through-*
out the two neighbouring Counties, who have
 given the truest and most desirable Testimony
 of their Approbation of this merciful Insti-
 tution here established. For Proof of which
 I need only refer you to our *List of Subscrip-*
tions.

AND as *this Town* is the *Place* where it
 took *its Rise*, and the *Seat* where it must fix
its Abode, and from whence, as from a *com-*
mon Centre, it must disperse and shed its In-
 fluences over *the adjacent Counties*, I must not
 forget to address my Thanks,

FIRST, to the *Magistracy*, for their obli-
 ging Concurrence to give it every Accommo-
 dation in their Power or Disposal, as well as
 for supporting it with their private Donations.

NEXT, to the Men of 'Trade and Business
 in all Branches, who have either singly, or
 jointly in their several *Companies* and *Societies*,
 done what *was in their Hearts and Hands to*
do,

do, by tendering their several Portions, either out of *Goods in Stock*, or out of their *common Funds*, or out of their *annual Benefits* and *Emoluments*, or out of their *private Purses*; and this with a *Chearfulness* and a *Simplicity*, as the *Apostle* terms it, *Rom. xii. 8.* which makes every Gift be esteemed beyond its intrinsic Value.

NOR must I omit to commemorate the gratuitous Tenders of the *Gentlemen of the Faculty*, without whom nothing could succeed as it should, and who have generously offered their Skill, and *the Riches* of their Experience to crown the Work, and give it *that Effect*, by God's Blessing, which is the first and principal End of its Destination.

AND, *lastly*, As to those of my own Profession, tho' I might suppress my Acknowledgments to them with the most Decency, and without giving any Offence to themselves; yet I must not leave them under the least Shadow of an Imputation (tho' it were only by an humorous Construction put upon such Omission) of their having taken the Part of
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the Priest and the Levite in the Parable, by only looking on, and passing by on the other Side; Thanks therefore to you also, my Brethren, for so freely proffering the Services belonging to your Function: which I trust will be of great Use to the Consolation and spiritual Improvement of such poor ignorant Christians, as it shall please God to bring, by Means of their Diseases and Disasters, under your Instructions.

AND as to the rest of *my Order*, who can take no Part in *this Ministration*, and who will take no Part in the *Brand* wherewith our Lord hath stigmatized the *Jewish Ministry*, tho' considered as a Body, we cannot keep equal Pace in these kinds of good Works with Persons who have more Command of this World's Treasures than we have; yet we will presume upon the most favourable Acceptance of what we *can do*, by referring to the Conduct and Example of our *Head or Chief*; whose Munificence on this Occasion may be allowed to be some Recompence for any Deficiencies of those among us, whose small Stipends, and those perhaps charged with no small Demands,

render them unable to do what they wish, to express their Zeal for this pious and charitable Work.

AND having occasionally mentioned the *Father of our Church in this Diocese*, I ought in Justice to his pure and disinterested Liberality, to add one Circumstance more, which I had an early Opportunity of learning from himself; which is, that had not this noble Design sprung, as it did, from another Quarter, he had it in his Resolutions to have propounded it himself in Person, the first Opportunity he should have after his Arrival in his Diocese. And altho' to a weak Mind it might have seemed some little Disappointment, to have the Publick Credit of such a Proposition unexpectedly storn away; yet so much more intent was he upon *the Thing*, than upon *any Praises* he might share in from it, that he even rejoiced to hear *the Goodness of the People* had got the Start of *his own*, and that he was coming to preside over a Flock in whom there appeared such benevolent Dispositions.

Now

Now what remains, but that we offer up our *most humble and hearty Thanks* to Almighty God for *the extraordinary Success* he hath hitherto vouchsafed to this *excellent Work*, by bringing it from such small Beginnings, and as it were from a *Grain of Mustard Seed*, Mark iv. 31. to the unexpected Growth in which we now behold it, *shooting out great Branches*, so that the sick Poor of the Land may lodge under the *Shadow of it*, ver. 32. and already arrived in so small a Time to such a Degree of Maturity, as to be this Day ripe for Execution.

WE are now assembled in his Courts to bless him for this Favour. And I presume all of us come hither with Uprightness of Heart, to make a *Sacrifice* and an *Oblation* to HIM, in our own Name, and in the Name of all the absent *Subscribers* and *Benefactors*, of all that we have, in any Shape, contributed or devoted to the Use of our *Poor, Sick, Lame*, or otherwise *Disabled* Neighbours: To bless him that we ourselves are neither tried by their Poverty nor their Pains: And to beg his Acceptance of what we dedicate to their Relief as our *Thank-*
of

offering * for our Exemption from their Sicknesses and Sorrows. Miserable as they are, still they are *His*; and what we give to their Use is *His*; and that we have an Heart to bestow it so, is *His* also: And whatever Success shall hereafter attend our Design, must be likewise *His* Gift. So that all *the Glory*, all *the Praise*, *first* and *last*, must be ascribed ultimately to *Him*, who is *the Giver of every good Thing*, and the Bringer out of *every good End* in all our Undertakings.

LET us then conclude with our earnest *Prayers* to *Him*, that it would please Him to prosper and perpetuate that Work to which He hath granted such auspicious Beginnings: That He would bless the Remedies and Means that shall be used by *the Physicians* and all Persons to be concern'd in the Cure of Maladies: That he would prosper all their *Consultations* and all their *Operations*: That he would direct the Councils of those, who from Time to Time

* In Allusion to an *Eucharistical Service* under the Law. See 2 *Chron.* xxix. 31. *Sacrifices and Thank-offerings*. *Sacrifices* were for the Expiation of Sin. *Thank-offerings* were to testify their grateful Acknowledgment of God's Mercies towards them. *Wilson's Christian Dictionary.* ch

Time shall have the Conduct or the Inspection of the Oeconomy of *the House*, that they may consult and transact every thing with *Discretion* and *Unanimity*: That he would bestow his Grace upon the inferior *Officers* and *Servants* belonging thereunto, that they may be *frugal*, *diligent*, and *faithful* in all Things: That both *within* and *without* every thing may be so wisely regulated, and prudently administer'd, as both to accomplish the Wishes of the *present Subscribers*, and to open the Hearts of others to follow their Example; And the *Whole*, (by affording *that real Benefit* to our poor *Neighbours* Bodies and Souls, and by doing *that Honour* to Charity and Religion which the *best constituted Infirmaries* can be supposed capable of *affording* and *doing*) may finally redound to His *Praise* and *Glory*, to whom be ascribed *all Power*, *Might*, *Majesty*, and *Dominion*, Now and Evermore.

F I N I S.